

Beyond Our Boundary Lines: Advocating for Agriculture

We save land in perpetuity through a legal document called a conservation easement – but that’s only just the beginning. How do we ensure that the farmland we’re protecting stays in farming, since a typical conservation easement does not include an obligation to do so? Or how do we ensure that conserved, pristine habitat isn’t degraded over time by poor water quality, since the safeguards within an easement for water quality protection only extend to the legal boundaries of that parcel? The answers to these questions are complex, and can’t be resolved with a single legal document. That’s why, over the course of the last two years, our Board of Directors has affirmed, and re-affirmed, that we need to be investing in work

that ensures that our water remains pure and that our conserved farms are actually being farmed. These new avenues of work are not tangential to our core mission of land preservation, but instead are central to it – they help ensure that each conservation easement will still be protecting precious natural resources well into the future.

This year USVLT received a three-year grant that enables us to invest more resources in our agricultural revitalization work. Jesse Wright was recently selected for a new position to head up this initiative. If her name sounds familiar, it’s because she is our existing Office & Outreach Manager. Jesse is eminently qualified to lead this initiative, as she has worked on the consumer side of our

local food system for years (you may know her from May Kelly’s Cottage), and is passionate about local food. She also recently earned a Master’s Degree in Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School. Jesse will now be splitting her time between her “old hat” of outreach and administration and her “new hat” of food system work. We are delighted to have Jesse full-time.

Long-term goals for this initiative include ensuring that more farmers are farming at a profit, and that more consumers are asking for and preferentially seeking out local products. Initial objectives are to enhance existing distribution networks, as well as to grow the market share for our local farmers through a collaborative and targeted marketing campaign. We are already meeting with other movers and shakers in the North Country’s food system network, and will soon be formulating a plan for concrete action, with farmer buy-in. We’ve got a lot of vision – now we need to consolidate wishes into an actionable plan, which is where the good, hard work begins.



Jesse at the Dundee property in Jackson/Linda Zych

What’s Inside

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust recently completed three remarkable land-protection projects, each an iconic part of their respective locations. Find out more about these properties on pages 4 & 5.



*Preserving Land for
Community Benefit*

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USVLT President's Message

Doug Burnell

USVLT closed on three significant easements in 2016, welcomed a diverse group of highly qualified new board members (while saying farewell to several hard-working seasoned veterans), and had the good fortune to receive a three-year grant to underwrite agriculture re-vitalization—you'll find more details on all the aforementioned in the pages of this fall newsletter.

Increasingly, the work USVLT undertakes highlights the fact that the issues we face are not confined to a single protected parcel, or to a single community in our service area, but instead cross town, state, and regional boundaries. Occasionally, this crossover phenomenon mirrors my own personal viewpoints as a working-woodlands owner and conservationist – the decisions I make about the management of my woodlots have repercussions that affect other nearby properties, and similarly, the actions of my abutters ripple across my land.

As a surveyor, I'm used to focusing on areas with fixed rectilinear boundaries, but to get good conservation work done, I need to expand my view across borders to consider forest ecology and function. USVLT is similarly reaching across boundaries: as we continue to investigate key questions about how to keep farmland in farming, or how to improve water quality along the Saco, we find ourselves working outside of our easement areas and preserves in stewardship of those natural resources we are charged with protecting. As an added benefit, we trust that our work is bridging human-community boundaries, too.



Recently, I have been volunteering my professional land-surveying expertise (and much good old-fashioned physical exertion) helping USVLT's current summer intern systematically brushing and flagging obscure boundary lines, then adding blazes and paint and 'tin square' signs around some of our preserves. All these garish markings, even though fading all too quickly in the face of lush New England forest growth, can sometimes seem like a contradiction with other open-space values. I can parenthetically attest that feeling old also results from retracing impossibly overgrown boundaries you so clearly marked 40-something years ago, not to mention the tired muscles.

Striving to become a greater force in preserving land for community benefit, USVLT finds itself alternatively marking its territory and trying to break down barriers. It sounds all-too-human -- which we are after all -- as we continue taking baby steps on this long journey toward protecting our natural resources "in perpetuity."

Welcome Our Newest Board Members



Pictured left to right: Mark Dindorf, Anne Pillion, Linda Zych, Rick Jenkinson

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust welcomed four new board members in late 2015 and early 2016, bringing diverse backgrounds and skill sets. A common theme among them is commitment to community service and environmental issues. At the same time, the Land Trust would like to express sincere gratitude for the work of three veteran board members whose terms expired in May, Dexter Harding, Tom Henderson and Mona Pinette. Tom (SACo) and Dexter (Development) continue on USVLT committees. Here's a look at our new members:

Mark Dindorf first hiked Mt. Chochoa at the age of five and has been an avid outdoorsman ever since. He moved to the White Mountains in 1980 to work for the AMC, and has been an innkeeper for 31 years, most recently for Notchland Inn in Hart's Location. Mark also is a 5th term selectman for Hart's Location, and he and his wife Nancy Ritger live on the Davis Path. In the late 1990s, Mark spearheaded the Bemis Bridge project – a replacement footbridge across the Saco River providing continued public access to the Davis Path.

Anne Pillion grew up in Jackson, and has 30 years of professional experience in the field of environmental site assessment & compliance. She has investigated contamination at Superfund sites and developed successful pollution prevention and sustainability programs. Most recently, Anne received an EPA lifetime achievement award for "Exceptional Commitment to Excellence" in recognition for her tireless advocacy on behalf of our environment. An avid birder, Anne also volunteers for Tin Mountain Conservation Center, leading their kestrel nesting box project. She lives in Intervale with her wife, Bartlett Police Chief Hadley Champlin.

Linda Zych is a retired elementary school and high school teacher, and a life-long student herself. She holds an undergraduate degree in zoology from University of New Hampshire, where she also earned her graduate degree in education. Linda also holds law degrees from Franklin Pierce Law Center and Boston University Law School. In addition to teaching, she has worked for a Dover, NH law firm. Active in numerous community organizations, Linda is also the Board President of M&D

Playhouse in North Conway. She and her husband Terry live in Intervale. **Rick Jenkinson** first visited the White Mountains on a hiking trip at age 12. He recently retired as Senior Director at Thermo Fisher Scientific, where Rick managed government relations and public affairs initiatives globally. Before joining Fisher Scientific in 2003, Rick was Vice President of Public Relations at AT&T Broadband. A 1979 graduate of the University of New Hampshire, he serves on two additional boards, the New Hampshire Institute of Politics and Piscataqua Savings Bank, and is active in the Appalachian Mountain Club. Rick and his wife, Vickie, reside in Kearsarge, and are active hikers and skiers.

Committee Spotlight

Did you know that USVLT has a unique committee charged with self-governance, organizational function, and strategic direction, aptly called "SACo" (short for Strategic Action Committee)?

SACo focuses on: board and committee recruitment, strategic organizational planning, and board and staff education on best practices. Importantly, SACo is charged with looking at our mission within a broad context. Yes – we're conserving land for community benefit, and our core work is and always will be legal land protection – but how else are we guaranteeing that our work creates lasting impact in our communities? To ensure that the natural resources we are charged with protecting will be here for future generations, we need to look beyond the four corners of an easement document or the monumented boundaries of a piece of land. To this end, SACo continues to do outreach and research in the areas of agricultural and water resources. For more details on this work or to become involved with one of our committees, please call or email the USVLT office.

Our Latest Land Protection Projects

With 58 projects completed over its 15-year history, the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust and its partners have now conserved over 11,000 acres. These properties include our communities' historic farms, sensitive habitat areas, and working forests. All of the properties protected by the Land Trust are vetted for their conservation values and help to safeguard the lands and waters that sustain our local communities and quality of life.

The permanent protection of these properties serves as a testament to our area's rich agricultural history, honors the lands and waters that sustain us, and is an investment in the future. The Land Trust's Board of Directors wishes to express their deep gratitude to all of the families that have made these recent projects possible.

MOUNT SURPRISE

In late April, the Land Trust became the proud owner of a piece of local history: Mount Surprise. At the turn of the last century, a network of carriage roads and trails connected the area's old hotels and inns to Mount Surprise, Bartlett Mountain, and Mount Kearsarge. In 2014, USVLT purchased a conservation easement on the 40-acre parcel that includes the summit of Mount Surprise (a conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the Land Trust and private landowners that safeguards a property's natural resources and prevents future development). The easement, which guarantees public access to the summit, was purchased from the extended Briggs family, who always wanted Mount Surprise to be available for all to enjoy.

For the past two years, the Land Trust has been working with the Briggs family to develop a forest management plan for the property. Then, in March of this year, the family contacted the Land Trust about taking full ownership of the property. The Land Trust, as owners "in fee," will continue to work on signage, trail upkeep, and the reestablishment of historic views across the Valley to the Cathedral and White Horse Ledges. "We are delighted to be entrusted with stewarding this historical gem into the future and are extremely grateful to the Briggs family for their donation," said USVLT Executive Director William Abbott. Stayed tuned for news about stewardship goals and opportunities for volunteering on this iconic property.

HAYES FARM

In mid-May, USVLT also completed a high-priority project in Jackson. Hayes Farm is an historic and idyllic 80-acre hillside farm at the top of Iron Mountain Road, with sweeping views of the Presidential Range and the Carter Range. "We are extremely grateful to the landowners, Robin Willits & Hayden Fitts, for working with the Land Trust over the years to protect historic Hayes Farm, which includes its original farmhouse and barn," said USVLT's Land Protection Specialist Linda Comeau. "Like stepping back in time, Hayes Farm remains much as it was when it was settled by the Hayes family in the early 1800s." The landowners generously donated a conservation easement to the Land Trust to ensure that Hayes Farm remains much as it is now for the benefit of future generations.

The scenic property is familiar to anyone who has hiked the Iron Mountain Trail, as the trailhead and parking area

are located onsite. Thanks to the generosity of the easement donors, the public will have guaranteed legal access to the trail, now and into the future. This assurance of trail access also opens the door for future grants for trail upkeep and maintenance.

LUCY FAMILY FARM PROJECT

The closing on Hayes Farm coincided with the completion of the Lucy Family Farm Project along the Saco River on West Side Road. This multi-year project protects 45 acres of high-quality farmland soils, as well as gorgeous views from West Side Road toward Cathedral Ledge.

Among Conway's original settlers, the Lucy clan began settling the area in the early 1800s. The Land Trust's conservation easement permanently protects the original John and Polly Lucy Homestead, which is nearly all of the property not already protected by conservation easements generously donated by Chester and Lydia Lucy to the Society for the

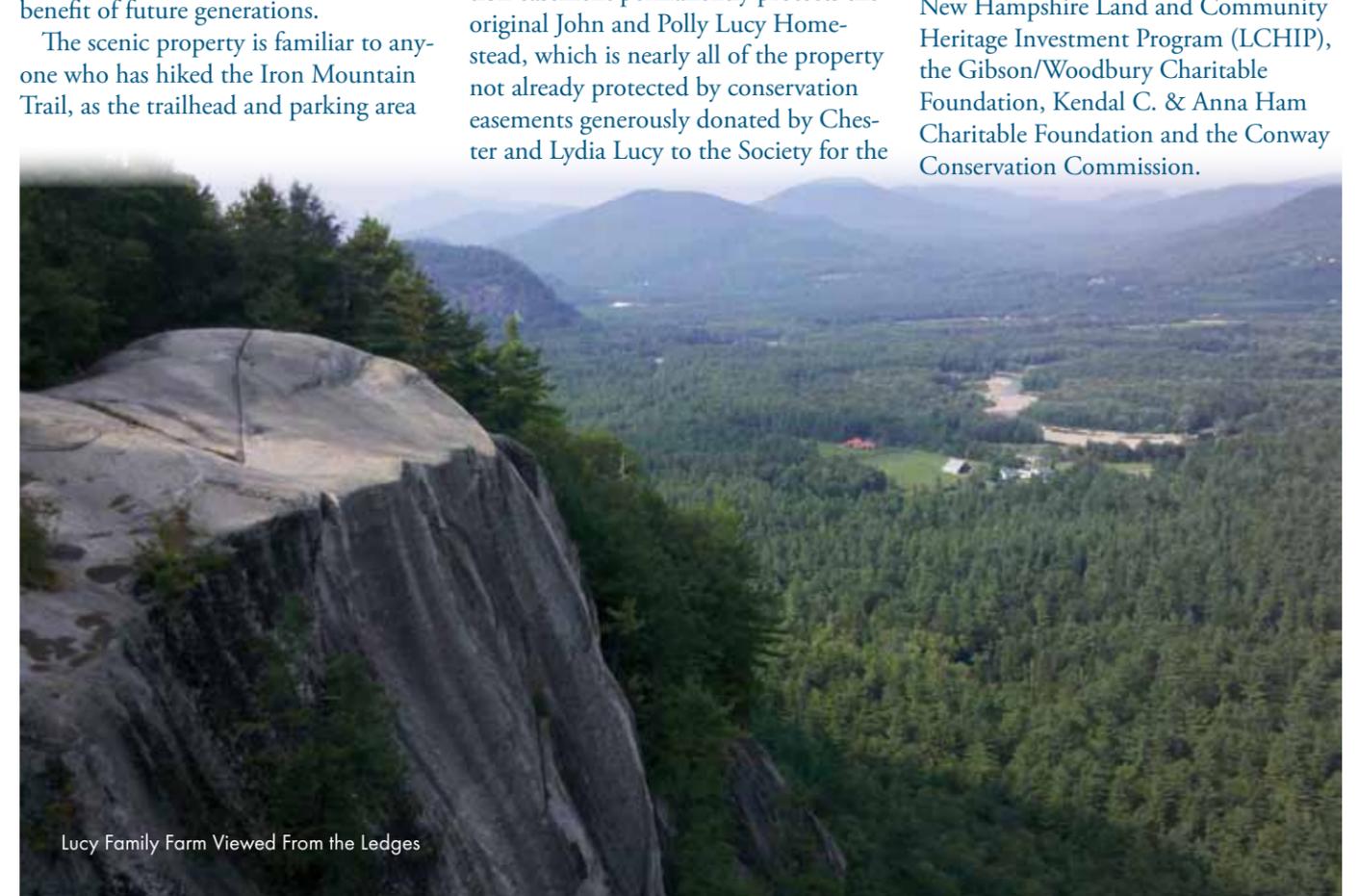
Protection of NH Forests in the 1980s and 1990s.

"Six generations of Lucys have lived on this land and in the farmhouse where my dad still lives. We've never left, and we'd like to see that it never changes. Years ago, my dad starting putting the family land in conservation. Now my brothers and sisters and I are following his lead. We're trying to make sure the land never goes away, just like the Lucys," said Nat Lucy.

The easement provides connectivity to other large blocks of undeveloped land, including Cathedral Ledge / Echo Lake State Park and the White Mountain National Forest. In addition to the Lucy family, project partners included the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the Gibson/Woodbury Charitable Foundation, Kendal C. & Anna Ham Charitable Foundation and the Conway Conservation Commission.



Hayes Family Farm



Lucy Family Farm Viewed From the Ledges

Water Works

2016 Stewardship Intern Perspective

I can feel the sun beating down on my back, and the sweat rolls down my forehead into my eyes, making it more challenging to distinguish the rock contours below. I have a five-gallon bucket in my right hand as I head for the bank of the Swift River, and begin to meander out toward midstream. It's important to fill the bucket from the midpoint, to ensure that my sample is the most representative of the river's water quality. After filling the clean bucket I begin the more difficult venture back to shore, balancing on the smooth slippery rocks in the fast-moving current, all while carrying 40 pounds of water.



As an intern at the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, I am performing water-quality testing throughout the headwaters of the Saco River. This data collection is a continuation of work started by another USVLT intern, Hannah Kiesler, in 2014. At a total of eleven sites in the towns of Jackson, Bartlett, Albany, Conway, and Fryeburg, I am testing for turbidity, pH, dissolved-oxygen concentration, water temperature, and specific conductance. I have been able to coordinate with Daryl Mazzaglia from the Bartlett Conservation Commission, and through their generosity I am able

to borrow their testing equipment. Compiling this data over time, and matching it with other data already gathered by the Bartlett Conservation Commission and other groups, will enable us to see trends in water quality along the Saco River. We need many more years of consistent records, matched up with weather patterns and river water levels, to determine cause and effect and target potential problem areas with respect to water quality. It's great to think that another intern in 2026 will be building on my work – and coming to some good conclusions!

2016 Stewardship Intern Steven Caracciolo is from Lovell, Maine and studying forestry at the University of New Hampshire. Along with his work on water-quality testing, he is also helping to build new trails and refresh boundary lines on USVLT preserves, monitor far-flung easement properties, and review old property files, ensuring that our records are up-to-date.

Businesses & Foundation Support

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- Grandy Oats
- Good Vibes Coffee Roasters
- Tamarack Construction
- The Echo Group
- The Other Store
- White Mountain Hotel

Foundation & Municipal Support:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easement
- Anonymous Foundations (2)
- Conway Conservation Commission — LCHIP Match Fund
- Fund for Maine Land Conservation of the Maine Community Foundation
- Gibson/Woodbury Charitable Foundation
- Kendal C. & Anna Ham Charitable Foundation
- Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)
- Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation:

- Governor Gallen Fund
- Jessie B. Cox Fund for Environment
- Lakes Region Environmental Fund
- Marshall Family Fund
- Natural Resources Fund
- Stanton & Elisabeth Davis Fund
- Thomas W. Haas Fund
- Newman's Own Foundation
- Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- Pequawket Foundation, an advised fund of the NH Charitable Foundation
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services

Great New Ways to Give in 2016

Now is the best time to get involved with the Land Trust. We have a full slate of land protection projects on our calendars, and every dollar you give today has the ability to help protect our region's most precious natural resources. Visit www.usvlt.org/support-our-work to see how your support can have impact. We're highlighting two such ways of supporting our work here:

The 'What For' and the 'How To' of Amazon Smile

We all are consumers, and chances are that all of us purchase items online from time to time. Did you know that Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is an AmazonSmile participant? AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support USVLT. With every eligible purchase you make, Amazon will donate a percentage to the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust.

Simply go to smile.amazon.com and sign up or you can use your existing Amazon.com account and select Upper Saco Valley Land Trust as your charitable organization to receive donations.

As you are filling your cart with gifts this season, know that you are supporting our work!

'Sustaining Stewards'

Sustaining Stewards are members who register for automatic monthly donations through their bank, credit card, Pay-Pal, or similar account. It's easy and efficient: once you've signed up as a Sustaining Steward, you will only receive an end of the year donor acknowledgment letter (for tax purposes), and there are no renewal reminders.

Sustaining Stewards ensure the daily work of USVLT is supported today in order to conserve land for tomorrow. These monthly donations strengthen the administrative fabric of USVLT and build a solid foundation for our future work. Please consider joining *today*.



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You can also donate online OR give a Gift Membership to a friend at www.usvlt.org

PLANNED GIVING

You can always have a future with the Land Trust. Include Upper Saco Valley Land Trust in your estate planning, when finalizing your will, or establishing an annuities trust. Call us 603-356-9683 for more information.

VOLUNTEER!

It's boots on the ground that makes land preservation happen. From monitoring easement properties to trail maintenance, Upper Saco Valley Land Trust has something for you!

Preserving Land for Community Benefit

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust...

- 9,558** • acres of forest
- 11,013** • acres protected
- 505** • member households
- 7,316** • feet of lake shoreline protected
- 15.75** • years that the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust has existed
- 3,853** • reported hours worked by staff in the first three quarters of 2016
- 2,204,612** • federal, state & town funding, in dollars, leveraged by our members' contributions to land campaigns
- 58** • conservation projects (so far!)
- 35** • % of operating budget fueled by membership donations alone
- 69,704** • feet of river frontage protected (over 13.2 miles!)
- 1,013,148** • metric tons of carbon sequestered in forests
- 130,000** • operating budget, in dollars
- 718** • acres of farmland protected
- 520** • acres of wetland protected

serves northern Carroll and western Oxford counties including the communities of Bartlett, Jackson, Conway, Albany, Hart's Location, Madison, Eaton, Chatham, Fryeburg, Brownfield and Denmark.



"There are no passengers on the spaceship Earth. We are all crew."

MARSHALL MCLUHAN

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